

A STUDY OF THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ZEN BUDDHISM IN VIETNAM



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ABSTRACT

Zen is an important branch of Buddhism and has made a great contribution to Vietnamese Buddhism. Some people believe that Zen appeared in Vietnam in the 3rd century. Meanwhile, there is a controversy that it was not until the 6th century that Zen Buddhism really spread into Vietnam. The need for the current study is significant and provides a comprehensive, clear view about the origin and development of Zen Buddhism in Vietnam. This article followed by clarification of the origin and the development of Zen in Vietnam through transmission from generation to generation and Zen teachings. And finally the article proceeds with an analysis of the Vietnamese Zen with reference to Zen Buddhism in the Scriptures.

Keywords: Vietnamese Zen; Zen Teachings; Truc Lam Zen School

INTRODUCTION

The Vinītaruci Zen School was present in Vietnam in the sixth century having been introduced by Zen Master Vinītaruci. Then Zen Master Vo Ngon Thong came to Vietnam to transmit the Zen style of Huineng in the ninth century and established Vo Ngon Thong Zen School. In the eleventh century, Master Thao Duong, a Chinese Zen Master, established Thao Duong Zen School during the Ly dynasty. For those three schools the Patriarchs were foreigners and Zen techniques varied from school to school. Consequently the techniques were not suitable for the spiritual level and culture of Vietnamese people at that time.

Moreover, the changes in the financial and political situations, as well as the social life of people during the Ly dynasty up to the beginning of the Tran dynasty, required a unity of politics and society. These changes required a unity of thought and way of thinking. Consequently after the resistance wars against the Nguyen and the war of national liberation there was still suffering and turbulence. After the war the problem was how to stabilize life, heal the wounds of war, resolve the conflicts between Royalty and the mechanism of government and the contradictions in peoples' lives and as a consequence develop the nation. Therefore a unified ideology for the entire nation was needed. The unifying factor was Buddhist ideology. Accordingly the Truc Lam Zen School (TLZS) encouraged such unity and because it was based on a harmony of Zen the fusion produced a new and unique style of distinctly Vietnamese Buddhism.

Additionally the Truc Lam Zen School was founded by the Vietnamese Zen Patriarchs Tran Nhan Tong and as a result the Zen teachings are closer to the lifestyle and habits of Vietnamese people and are more flexible being based on their spiritual levels on their way to change awareness and behavior to solve social problems and approach the wisdom.

According to the above information there were many famous Zen Schools in Vietnam and the ancestors of Vietnamese Buddhism were great Zen masters. The purpose of this article is to shed new light on the stages of the origin and development of Zen in Vietnam by citing a wider range of sources than hitherto and by seeking a better understanding of the correlations between the key elements that played a role in its formation. Consequently it will be recognized how Vietnamese people in the past practiced spiritually, who the great Zen Masters were, and how enlightened they were and how a suitable method for each practitioner could be realized.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ZEN FROM INDIA TO CHINA

The traces of Zen Buddhism in the earliest Buddhist period were surveyed from the early days of Buddhism until the formation of the schools of the Mādhyamika, Yogacara and the arising of Zen. The Buddha was a person who discovered the truth of the Four Noble Truths (*Ariyā-sacca*) as well as the Eightfold Path (*Ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo*) leading to liberation of suffering. They emphasize the doctrine of the ‘not self’ (*anattā*) and dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) as stated in the earlier parts of the Pāli Canon.¹ All compounded things are from dependent arising; consequently they are called emptiness. This is also the concept of emptiness in the Prajñāpāramitā Sutra of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Madhyamaka schools of Nagarjuna understood the realization of emptiness (*Śūnyatā*) is liberation. Moreover the arising philosophy of Mind-only is to enlighten a new consciousness of enlightenment through a journey of understanding Consciousness through the theory of the threefold Nature (*trisvabhava*) that clarifies the fundamental problems in the whole ideology of Buddhist philosophy according to the study of logic and psychology. The Mind-only and the Madhyamaka were two large schools that extended the Mahāyāna ideas to the extreme of Buddhist philosophy in the 2nd century to the sixth century in India. At that juncture the ascending of Zen Buddhism was trying to return to the origins of the Buddhist tradition by insisting on the spontaneity of the human mind. When we are liberated from the cobwebs of habit and prejudiced thoughts and leap into a bottomless abyss and abandon all preconceived ideas we will get enlightenment totally or *Satori*.

THE ORIGIN OF AND DISSEMINATION OF ZEN BUDDHISM IN VIETNAM

In this part the researcher will explore the period Buddhism came to Vietnam to the stage of Zen rising. From the 6th century on three Chinese Zen schools were established in Vietnam, including Vinītaruci, Vo Ngon Thong and Thao Duong thus Zen Buddhism flourished in Vietnam from the 6th century to the 12th century.

¹S III 141.

VINĪTARUCI SCHOOL (580 CE TO 1213 CE)

Vinītaruci was an Indian monk but he received the secret mind seal from the Third Patriarch Chinese Zen master Sēngcan and later he became a Patriarch who founded Zen in Vietnam in the sixth century.²

In 574 CE a Brahmin from the Indian South called Vinītaruci travelled to north China searching for a teacher Master.³ On the way he came to the mountain where Sēngcan lived and he took Sēngcan as his Master. Then Sēngcan advised Vinītaruci to continue travelling to the South because Emperor Wu of Northern Zhou had destroyed Buddhism in the North. In 580 CE he came to Guangzhou and became an Abbot at Che Chi monastery. During six years there he translated ‘Gayāśīrsa Sūtra’⁴ and ‘The Sutra of Karmic Retributions’ from Sanskrit into Chinese. In 580 CE he came to Vietnam and was an Abbot at Phap Van monastery where he translated the ‘Mahāyāna-vaipulyadhārānī Sūtra’⁵ into Chinese language.⁶ He stayed at Phap Van monastery for 14 years until he died in 594. Vinītaruci translated the third Sutra and converted many disciples. The next person was Phap Hien a monk who received the secret mind seal and became the second Patriarch of this Zen.

When Vinītaruci first came from Guangzhou and lodged at Phap Van Temple and met Phap Hien he looked him over carefully and said:

“What is your name?”

Phap Hien said: “What is your name, Master?”

Vinītaruci said: “You do not have a name?”

Phap Hien said: “Of course I have a name, but how can you understand it?”

Vinītaruci scolded him, saying: “Why use understanding?”⁷

²Wong, K.K. **The Complete Book of Zen**. Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 2002, p. 148.

³Neelis, J. **Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia**. Boston: Brill, 2011, pp. 251-252.

⁴Taishō Tripiṭaka. **Mañjuśrī ask Bodhi Sutra**. Vol 14, no.464. 466: 483, c12 - 486, c27).

⁵Taishō Tripiṭaka. **Ji Zhu Fangdeng Xue Jing**. Vol 09, no.274.no. 275: 379-383.

⁶Tu, Thich Thanh. **Vietnamese Zen Masters**. HCM City: Ho Chi Minh City Publishing House, 1999, p. 217.

⁷Tu, Nguyen Cuong. **Zen in Medieval Vietnam: A Study and Translation of Thien Uyen Tap Anh**. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997, p. 166.

Because of the nature of Vinītaruci's reply Phap Hien was abruptly awakened and bowed down and asked to be his disciple. For about fourteen years Phap Hien studied meditation with Vinītaruci. In 594 CE, Vinītaruci called him to transmit the seal-of-mind.

Vinītaruci's Zen School conveyed the stream of Buddhist thoughts in the sixth century to problems happening nearly 100 years before and it explained why the Buddha's real image did not appear in the fifth century.⁸ Today we base our study of this problem on the verse of passing away, and the Vinītaruci's translation of the Sutra.

The contents of the Gayāśīrsa Sūtra refer to problems such as 'Who practices the Bodhi? Who gets the Bodhi?'

That text also advances the method for attaining the Bodhi by using the body or the mind:

Bodhi is only the name without the real character, no color, no sound, no vision, no entering, no knowing, no going, no coming. It arises from 'the twelve causes and conditions', no place, no vision. Knowing like that, we call it the Bodhi.⁹

Enlightenment cannot be expressed in words and writing. It is beyond the concepts of existence and non-existence, or coming and going. To enter the Bodhi we must enter the place where we cannot enter. It means we stick to nothing.¹⁰ These are matters that Vietnamese Zen as well as Chinese Zen developed in the kōans for penetrating enlightenment. Bodhi also is said to be the nature of things which Vinītaruci called 'the seal-of-mind' and before his death he transmitted it to his disciple Phap Hien.

So through a combination of two translations of Vinītaruci and 'Thien Uyen Tap Anh' records we get a clear insight into Vinītaruci's Zen that is basically the meditative tradition with a blend of elements of Pure Land Buddhism and Esoteric Sect.

In Vietnam the Vinītaruci School spread through nineteen successive generations from 580 to 1213 CE.¹¹ In the Tran dynasty, Vinītaruci sect no longer continued.

⁸That, Le Manh. **History of Buddhism in Vietnam**. Vol. II. HCM City: HCM Publishing House, 2001, p. 29.

⁹*Op. cit.* Taishō Tripiṭaka, vol 14, no.466: 487, a21-29.

¹⁰*Op. cit.* Taishō Tripiṭaka, vol 14, no.466: 487, b12-20.

¹¹**An.:** 50.

THE VO NGON THONG ZEN SCHOOL (820 CE TO 1291 CE)

In the ninth century 820 C.E. Zen Master Wuyantong, known in Vietnam as Vo Ngon Thong, was a Chinese Buddhist monk who went to Phu Dong village to reside in the Kien So temple in Bac Ninh, Northern Vietnam. There he founded the Vo Ngon Thong Zen Sect utilizing Bich-quan, or ‘wall-contemplation,’ a practice originating with Bodhidharma to realize the ultimate reality of the nature of mind.¹² The Vo Ngon Thong Zen School transmitted through 17th generations until the Tran dynasty.

One day he heard Master Baizhang teach: “When the mind ground is empty, the sun of wisdom spontaneously shines”.¹³ At these words Vo Ngon Thong had attainment of Zen from Zen Master Baizhang Huaihai.

In 820 CE, Vo Ngon Thong came to live in Kien So, Vietnam.¹⁴ Staying here for many years, Vo Ngon Thong generally sat facing the wall just meditating and no one knew him. The Abbot here was Cam Thanh, a secretly know enlightened Master, honored and revered him and served by his side.

One day Vo Ngon Thong summoned Cam Thanh and decided to transmit his seal-of-mind and final instructions before passing away:

All phenomena are born from mind.
Mind is intrinsically uncreated,
Therefore, phenomena have nowhere to abide.
If you realized the mind-ground,
Your actions are unobstructed.
Unless you meet someone with superior faculties,
Do not lightly admit anyone [to the Dharma].¹⁵

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ **CBETA**, X69, no.1323: 7, c12.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.* (Thu, 2008: 65).

¹⁵ Tu, Nguyen Cuong. **Zen in Medieval Vietnam: A Study and Translation of Thien Uyen**

He passed away in 826. Master Cam Thanh became the Second Patriarch of Vo Ngon Thong Zen School and Tue Trung Thuong Si was the last patriarch of Vo Ngon Thong Zen School.

According to the 'Collection of Outstanding Figures of the Zen Garden', Vo Ngon Thong sect transmitted for fifteen generations.¹⁶

THAO DUONG ZEN SCHOOL (1069 CE TO 1210 CE)

In the eleventh century Zen Master Thao Duong (997 - ?) was a Chinese Zen Master and a national teacher in the Ly Thanh Tong dynasty, he established the Thao Duong Zen School in Vietnamese Buddhism. However because several limited and unsuitable characteristics of this sect it was buried after more than 100 years of existence in the period from 1069 to 1210 CE.

According the author of 'Thien uyen tap anh' Zen Master Thao Duong transmitted the sect of Xuedou. Xuedou was another name of Zen Master Zhongxiān (980-1052) who belonged to the fourth generation of Yunmen Chinese Zen sect (638-713 CE), derived from Zen school of Huineng.

Although Yunmen Zen sect only developed over more than 200 years in China it left a deep impression not only in China but also in Vietnam. The Zen ideology of Zhongxiān was influenced by the ideology of Kōan. So Zen Thao Duong was Kōan ideology and Pure Land Buddhism.¹⁷ Zen master Thao Duong explained 'The Record of Xuedou' many times at Khai Quoc Pagoda. This Zen ideology later had a great influence on the development of Vietnamese Zen in the Tran and the work of Xuedou was taught in the hall of Tran dynasty in Vietnam between 1289 to 1357 CE.

The influence of this sect was only transmitted until 1210 CE. This sect brought literary and an intellectual tendency and so did not strike root in the masses and only affected some intellectuals who had knowledge of literature.¹⁸ Among the 18 members of this Zen line only 10 members were monks and up to 9 were laymen but almost all were

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ McLellan, Janet. **Many Petals of the Lotus: Five Asian Buddhist Communities in Toronto.** Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999, p. 110.

¹⁸ Lang, Nguyen. **Essays on the History of Vietnamese Buddhism.** Hanoi: Literature Publishing House, 2009, p. 151.

kings and mandarins. For the reasons above the Zen sect of Thao Duong did not have enough power to make up an independent living monastic traditional order to circulate later. The extension of the Thao Duong tradition spanned five generations and eighteen patriarchs from 1054 to 1210 CE.¹⁹

Thao Duong Zen dominated the operations of the Buddhist period at that time and this was considered as the engaged Buddhist period. Practitioners embraced monks and lay Buddhists participated in many fields to serve many and various social activities. Later, in the Tran from 1225 to 1400 CE the Truc Lam sect also was affected by those three sects.

THE HIGHER DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAMESE ZEN (FROM 1292 CE)

In 1292 CE, the Zen Sect of Tran dynasty had a new transformation. Master Tran Nhan Tong combined the previous Zen Schools to establish the Truc Lam Zen School (TLZS). From here, Vietnamese Zen entered a new era; the era of “A unified sect of Buddhism”. TLZS was considered as a continuation but was in fact a unity of three Vietnamese Zen lines of the 12th century, the Thao Duong, Vo Ngon Thong and Vinitaruci.

Two main points the Zen Teachings of TLZS: 1) Seeing into One’s Self-nature, 2) The Buddha in your mind.

SEEING INTO ONE’S SELF-NATURE

The essence of practicing the method of Master Tran Nhan Tong is to realize one’s own nature. That is a state with an unexpected and wonderful effect on mind which the Zen sect considers the spirit of all dharmas.

In 1304 CE Master Tran Nhan Tong left the mountain and went around advising people to practice meditation and then he went to Sung Nghiem temple in Linh Son Mountain to preach Dharma (Sinh, 2006: 183).

At the beginning of the Dharma session he took a seat and read a verse. A monk asked asked:

¹⁹ An, 107.

“What is Buddha?”

He replied, “To accept just like ancient times is to go wrong.”

“What is Dharma?”

He replied, “To accept just like ancient times is to go wrong.”

“What is the Shanghai?”

He replied, “To accept just like ancient times is to go wrong.”²⁰

With the above answers, Master Tran Nhan Tong wanted to teach the monk to experience reality by intuitively, free from the dualism of subject and object. It is good that a practitioner thinks of the real nature of an event after observing and recognizing it. If he only thinks of the concept of events, he cannot see their real nature.

In the discourse at Ky Lan Hall, Master Tran Nhan Tong said that original nature is transparent and is neither good nor evil. Due to picking and choosing, numerous ways but owing to a shadow of delusion, everything becomes greatly set apart. From the very beginning, nothing is lacking in everyone, all is inherent in everyone. Just like form and shadow, Buddha-nature and Dharma-nature occasionally appear and disappear, neither attached to nor detached from each other.²¹

One’s own nature is pure and quiet as it is in itself, only when it recognizes an objective world and thinks of it as something is it disturbed (Barrett, 1996: 200). It becomes contaminated when it is blemished by passions (*upaklesa*) and adventitious defilements (*agantukaraja*). This nature does not consist in knowing perceptions (*sañjānāti*), recognitions (*viñānāti*), or common inference in conceptual categories (*paññatti*), or knowledge through appreciation and comparison, so it is infinite knowing (*aciñteyya*). It is the intuitive nature of wisdom, the right mindfulness of insight meditation (*Vipassanā ñāṇa*), under the form of knowing (*pajānanā*) in right mindfulness (*sati*) and awareness (*sampajaññā*). Furthermore it is direct intuitive insight into the reality of dharma (*paramattha dhamma*); it is not indirect knowing of consciousness based on categorization (*paññatti*).²²

²⁰ Giac, Nguyen. **Tran Nhan Tong: The King Who Founded a Zen School**. California. Thien Tri Thuc Publications, 2010. p. 139.

²¹ *Op. cit.* That, 2010: 188.

²² Minh, Vien. **Buddhist Meditation: Theravāda and Mahāyāna**. Hanoi: Religion Publishing House, 2008, p. 170.

Further in the dialogue, the Master Tran Nhan Tong continued to teach about One's Self-nature:

- Dharma is nature; Buddha is mind. No nature is no Dharma. No mind is no Buddha. Mind is Buddha, mind is Dharma; Dharma is essentially no Dharma. Dharma is mind, mind is essentially no mind; mind is Buddha.

- Venerables, time passes so fast, human life is not permanent. Eating gruel and eating vegetables, why do you understand nothing about the bowls, the spoons, and the chopsticks?

A monk asked about the body of the Dharma:

- What is pure dharmakāya?

Master Tran Nhan Tong said:

- A golden chisel drops into lion feces. An ugly man carries a bundle of fragrant incense sticks.²³

In his answer, 'golden chisels' are valuable and pure, 'lion feces' are dusty. Fragrance is clear, good and an ugly man is dusty, ugly. He wanted to show the mind directly what is in front of one, without attachment to discriminating conceptions of being dusty, clear, good, or bad; that is the pure body of the Dharma. The meditation mind transcends the discriminating mind.

This Zen teaching is simple. In insight meditation, related Mahasatipaṭṭhāna, concerned with the Mindfulness of the Bodily Postures and Acts (*sabbaṭṭhāna*), the Buddha taught: When defecating or urinating, one should know exactly what one is doing (*Uccāra passāva kamme sampajāna kārī hoti*).²⁴ If a person has right mindfulness, they look at a turd and see the reality. A practitioner concentrates on the feeling while contracting, having pain..., and he has the righteous feeling of the intuitive nature of that state. In a similar fashion, the Master Tran Nhan Tong awakened monks according to the teachings of the Buddha.

²³ *Op. cit* Giac, 2010: 149.

²⁴ **D II** 292.

THE BUDDHA IN YOUR MIND

The special point of Tran Nhan Tong's Zen is the statement 'Your very mind is Buddha.' It is a kind of Zen that anybody who practices it will be able to comprehend and adapt himself to it. Zen is a method to liberate the boundless energy source of the internal mind and see the real value and the awe-inspiring nature of things. The real truth is not far away we do not need to look outward to find it. It is right in the mind of every individual.

Tran Thai Tong used to receive the Dharma teachings from the National Teacher Phu Van:

"In the mountain there is no Buddha, the Buddha is only in the mind" (Lang, 2000: 221).

And the first Patriarch, Master Tran Nhan Tong said:

And then you know!
 Buddha is in the house;
 You do not need to search afar.
 You are looking for Buddha,
 Because you neglect the source.
 When you realize the nature of awareness,
 You then will know that Buddha is you.²⁵

The way to attain Enlightenment is to return to oneself, looking into oneself and not looking anywhere else. Zen followers always say: 'The Sea of suffering is boundless, so then return to see the shore.' That also means as Tran Nhan Tong said, the treasure is in your house, do not search anywhere else.²⁶

Master Tran Nhan Tong realized the truth while he was a Prince, through a revealing sentence of Tue Trung Thuong Si: 'Looking inward to shine up oneself is the main duty'. It means the duty and responsibility of practitioners is to correct themselves, to turn to the Buddha-nature of oneself and not to seek anything outside. It means to turn to one's true

²⁵ *Op. cit* Giac, 2010: 33.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 55.

mind, reality, Buddha nature, *bhutatathata*, the Buddha-wisdom of oneself. To turn back and reflect on oneself like “the talismanic pearl” of the chapter in ‘Parables of the Lotus Sutra’.²⁷ The pearl is in the tail but we do not know it and like the Buddha-wisdom it is in every person but we search for it outside. As the Master wrote ‘Awakened in the Dust of Life’, “The gem is in the house, no need to find it outside.” The practitioner should look into himself, should reflect the light of awareness inwardly to become enlightened.

The phenomenal world and nature as it is are not different, or separate: they are one. The biggest problem is the mind. With a calm mind we can see *samsāra* is *nirvāṇa*; the mind is the Buddha.²⁸ But with a bustling, unsteady mind, we see that birth is birth, and death is death. All are one or separated from the mind. The practitioner concentrates on all actions and deeds in his daily life. He does not need to wait for an advantageous situation or look for a special method, but only needs to look at his posture, reactions, feelings, and ideas. Obviously, on the face, the nostrils turn down and the eyebrows cross above the eyes; we only get an insight into it. What is called the threefold gate of precepts, meditation and wisdom is not lacking within you. “Venerables, time passes so fast, human life is not permanent. Eating gruel and eating vegetables, why do you understand nothing about the bowls, the spoons, and the chopsticks?”²⁹ Master Tran Nhan Tong was referring to the experience and transmission of the core-thought of Zen.

In summary, TLZS declared that only return One’s Self-nature will attain to Sudden Enlightenment. Looking from thought-angle, viewpoint “the mind is the Buddha’ or ‘Buddha Nature’. Master Tran Nhan Tong denied every tie from outside, broke through every attachment, eliminated every authority of tradition as well as in the present. All belongs to the mind and from this angle people can become subject of self then the effect of liberating thought that can take effect from end to end of all time.

²⁷ Taishō Tripitaka. **Ji Zhu Fangdeng Xue Jing**. Vol 09, no.274, no. 262: 10, b28.

²⁸ Taishō Tripitaka. **Record of the Lamp’s Transmission from the Jingde Era**. Vol 51, no.2076: 437, c19-20).

²⁹ Tri, Phan Minh. “**Zen Master Tran Nhan Tong, His Teachings and Literature.**” Journal of Phap Luan Buddhist Studies, vol 8, BE 2552, p. 163.

AN ANALYSIS OF VIETNAMESE ZEN WITH REFERENCE TO ZEN BUDDHISM IN THE SCRIPTURES

At the beginning of Zen history, the center of interest was in the Buddha-nature or Self-nature, which is inherited in all human beings and is absolutely pure.³⁰ Self-nature is the Buddha, and the Buddha is Self-nature. Therefore, seeing into one's Self-nature is to become the Buddha. Your own mind is the Buddha; nothing can be established outside the mind.³¹ That is an original purity of self-nature and our looking directly into this truth is fundamentally to understand Zen thoughts.

For 'Seeing into One's Self-Nature,' the point is how to make people recognize their Buddha-nature. The Zen explains that living beings have lost sight of their light, their original brightness, even though it shines within them all day long. The essence of the Truc Lam Zen is to realize one's own nature, or at least to be able to catch sight of it. The Buddha nature always appears in clear vision but this nature is difficult to recognize because we often equate it with empirical consciousness. When a practitioner realizes their Buddha-nature mind, in motion or in calmness, nature always lights the practitioner's mind. 'The first catching sight of nature' is considered the most important by Buddhist philosophers; all practitioners should try to attain that 'first.' All the various trainings and cultivations are only preparations for it. Once we are able to enter into One's self-nature, Zen becomes a naturally contingent action in life.

To attain Sudden Enlightenment is to return to the intuitive nature that is empty, peaceful, pure and devoid of negative states of mind. The Zen Master talk about One's Self-nature to remind the practitioners to always keep vigilant to appearance happening during everyday life, because they have many attachments that can easily fall prey them to covetousness, grief, and despair, as described in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta. This is the very important Zen method for practitioners.

30 Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro. **The Zen Doctrine of No-mind: The Significance of the Sūtra of Huineng**

(Wei-Lang). York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1991, p. 31.

31 Hua, Master. **The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra**. Burlingame. Buddhist Text

Translation Society, 2001, p. 412.

We can see that the theory of Buddha Nature in Zen has introduced by the Buddha to Bāhiya in Khuddhaka Nikāya: One day the Venerable Bāhiya was spoken to by the gods, and he knew himself not yet enlightened, he immediately tried to meet Buddha to ask for a teaching.

At that time, the Buddha was going into Sāvatti city for alms, the Buddha instructed:

Then, Bāhiya, you should train yourself thus: In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself.³²

Thus, seeing and knowing as real in Theravāda meditation is defined as insight of things as they are (*yathābhūta ñāṇadassana*). When seeing in bright directness and beyond the notions of names and appearances (*nāma-attha*), the true nature will appear, as in the Vietnamese Zen Buddhism, Mater Tran Nhan Tong said: “Live with the empty mind; thus, you will naturally enter the way.”³³

After the practitioner sees the Buddha nature, lives with the Buddha nature in his own actions, as the Buddha taught in Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta. The Buddha said:

Here a monk knows the eye, knows sight-objects, and he knows whatever fetter arises dependent on the two. And he knows how an unarisen fetter comes to arise, and he knows how the abandonment of an arisen fetter comes about, and he knows how the non-arising of the abandoned fetter in the future will come about. He knows the ear and knows sounds... He knows the nose, and knows smells... He knows the tongue and knows tastes.³⁴

32 **U I** 10

33 *Op. cit* Giac, 2010: 37.

34 **D II** 290-315.

As well, in Zen Buddhism, Chan Master Jianzhi Sengcan said: “All is empty, clear, self-illuminating, with no exertion of the mind’s power,”³⁵ or Zen Master Baizhang Huaihai said:

When the mind is without activity, the ground of the mind is as the sky; the sun of wisdom appears of its own, like the sun emerging when the clouds part.³⁶

The Buddha Nature or inherent intelligence without impermanence which can see every psychological phenomenon (unwholesome, wholesome, rootless consciousness, functional consciousness) always arising and disappearing, but not at all dominated. This was said by the Blessed One, said by the Arahant:

There is, monks, an unborn-unbecome-unmade-unfabricated. If there were not that unborn-unbecome-unmade-unfabricated, there would not be the case that emancipation from the born-become-made-fabricated would be discerned. But precisely because there is an unborn-unbecome-unmade-unfabricated, emancipation from the born-become-made-fabricated is thus discerned.³⁷

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The researcher divided it into two main groups: Zen Buddhism in Vietnam and Vietnamese Zen Buddhism. Chinese Zen was spread and formed sects in Vietnam e.g. Vinītaruci Zen, Vo Ngon Thong Zen and Thao Duong Zen which still kept the nature of Chinese Zen. After Vietnamese people received Zen Buddhism they gradually developed it and formed Vietnamese Zen Schools. Truc Lam Zen School is the only native one of Buddhism in Vietnam with Zen teachings and methods that are suitable for Vietnamese people and society. After undergoing an introduction and long-term development Vietnamese Zen Buddhism did not change its nature from the original. Vietnamese Zen, the Truc Lam

³⁵ Taishō Tripiṭaka. **The Faith Mind Inscription**. Vol.48, no. 2010. no. 2010: 376, c29.

³⁶ (CBETA, X69, no. 1323: 7, c12)

³⁷ (Udāna VIII 3,166)

Zen teachings have guided practitioners in Zen meditation to realize one's own nature and encouraged them to awaken their Buddha nature in the dust of life.

The issues that the researcher did not study, but further studies should be carried out on Zen e.g. a more detailed observation of 'The cognitive process through Zen Buddhism' would constitute an interesting research.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The research has determined the origin of Zen Buddhism in Vietnam. In the 3rd century CE Master Khuong Tang Hoi spread meditation in Giao Chi and is considered as the first Master in the history of Vietnamese Buddhism, but that time Zen was not being spread in Vietnam. From the 6th century Chinese Zen started spreading in Vietnam through Vinītaruci. Vietnamese Zen reached the pinnacle of development because of the Truc Lam Zen School in 1299 CE which was founded by Master Tran Nhan Tong in Vietnam.

After undergoing an introduction and long-term development Vietnamese Zen Buddhism did not change its nature from the original.

Vietnamese Zen, especially Truc Lam Zen School, not only maintains its motto of Zen, but also introduces more ways to give up the gradual elimination of defilements (*kilesa*), therefore the progression might be described as a 'gradual purification of the mind' as a skillful means (*upāya*) to bring people to awakening.

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